

Respected Sir,

As you are kindly aware, All India Radio and Doordarshan were purely Government organizations till 1997. They played the role of National and Public broadcaster and served as the voice of the Government and the people. Then, to give it better functional autonomy, it was decided by the Hon'ble Parliament to convert it into Prasar Bharati. This move was expected to enable the organization to function freely and fearlessly as a true Public Service Broadcaster.

AIR has a network of 236 Broadcasting Centers with 143 Medium Frequency(MW), 54 High Frequency(SW) and 161 FM Transmitters. The coverage is 91.42% of the area, serving 99.13% of the people in the largest democracy of the world. AIR covers 24 languages and 146 Dialects in Home Services. In External Services, it covers 27 Languages, 17 National and 10 Foreign Languages. In addition to this terrestrial network, AIR started Direct to Home (DTH) services with 12 channels on free to air band.

Doordarshan has a network of 64 Production Centres and 1404 Transmitters, to telecast the programmes in 24 channels. The coverage is 89% of the area, serving 94% of the people in India in addition to crores of viewers overseas through satellite network. Doordarshan started Direct to Home (DTH) services with 30 channels on free to air band. It may kindly be noted that Doordarshan is the only TV network in the world offering DTH services on free of cost.

Being a media with vast reach, All India Radio & Doordarshan have been playing a pivotal role as an instrument of social and economic development besides entertaining people.

We are performing the dual role of Public Service Broadcaster as well as National Broadcaster by serving the nation even in the border area, remotest terrain & disturbed areas may it be in the J&K, North East or islands like Port Blair and Lakshadweep. Section 12 of Prasar Bharati Act also entrusts both these responsibilities with this media organisation.

Section 12.1 of the Prasar Bharati Act says that it shall be the primary duty of the Corporation to organise and conduct Public Broadcasting Services to inform, educate and entertain the public and to ensure a balanced development of broadcasting on radio and television. While section 12.2.(b) to 12.2.(p) defines the duties of Public Service Broadcasting, section 12.2.(a) determine the duties of National broadcaster: upholding the unity and integrity of the country and the values enshrined in the Constitution;

We the employees of All India Radio and Doordarshan have been placed in service of Prasar Bharati on deemed deputation basis. This has created a situation where the employees have to suffer from both ends. They lost the benefits; they were entitled to as Government employees and got nothing in return.

The experience of the last 10 years clearly indicates that Prasar Bharati in the present form is neither financially viable (nor professionally well equipped to face the challenges of the day). A part of the annual expenditure of Prasar Bharati is coming from the Government in the form of grant-in aid. The revenue generated by Prasar Bharati is used for the rest. Thus the pay & perks, which include the pension and gratuity, and the career progression of the 45,000 employees, are not secured in Prasar Bharati.

Going by the global trend All India Radio and Doordarshan, being the Public Service broadcaster, are to be financially supported by the Government to discharge the national duties and responsibilities. Also in view of the multidimensional socio-cultural fabrics of India, the age-old broadcasting organization like AIR & Doordarshan, which have discharged the duties towards national integration, preservation of art and culture and socio-economic development of the nation, should not be left to the mercy of the market forces. ***These responsibilities cannot be compared with the aims & objectives of any other Corporation, thereby necessitate the need for a serious thought to roll back the AIR & DD to the Govt of India by repealing the Prasar Bharati Act.***

Financially!

We apprehend that ^{there is a clandestine plan to for the} ~~country is being subtly prepared to accept the~~ privatization of the Public Broadcaster. ~~Starving~~ Prasar Bharati will become vulnerable to market forces. The role of the Prasar Bharati is quite different from that of private channels. It cannot earn money and will meet its natural death in the fierce competition.

Further we believe that there is a conspiracy to ultimately disinvest Prasar Bharati as a loss making PSU. The assets of the organization have been drastically undervalued with such an ulterior motive.

We would like to bring to your kind notice that the PB Act was brought in to provide autonomy to AIR & Doordarshan particularly for News & Current Affairs. Unfortunately, the IIS officers who are primarily responsible for News and Current Affairs have been given an option to continue in Prasar Bharati as Govt servants while other employees who are

not directly related to autonomy are being asked for absorption in Prasar Bharati. This is contradictory to the spirit of the Act and rather it should be the other way round; The employees other than from the News may be allowed to continue to work in Prasar Bharati as Govt servants and the employees connected with News should be brought under the direct control of Prasar Bharati to bring the autonomy in letter and spirit.

With this background we the employees of AIR & Doordarshan demand that the employees and the multi-crores assets of AIR & Doordarshan should be with the Government and let the Prasar Bharati Board act independently in the line of Indian Railways, if it is not possible to "Repeal the Prasar Bharati Act".

In this spirit, NFADE proposed some amendments in the Prasar Bharati Act to ensure the smooth functioning of Prasar Bharati to fulfill its responsibilities of the National Broadcaster as well the Public Service Broadcaster of this great Country. NFADE has already submitted these proposals to the hon'ble GoM.

Sir, we are determined to defend the interests of this august Organization and its employees.

We are confident that your intervention will make all the difference to keep the National electronic media alive in the interest of our great nation to discharge its duties as public broadcaster in a befitting manner.

We request your good self to kindly forward this letter with your most valuable recommendation to Sh. Priya Ranjan Dasmunsi, hon'ble Minister for Information & Broadcasting and Parliamentary Affairs, Shastri Bhawan, New Delhi - 110001.

With deep regards.